

Aggieland

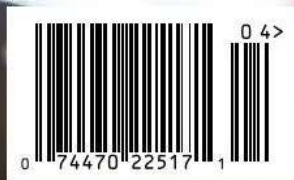
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ALSO INSIDE

AGGIE SPORTS PROVIDE
WONDERFUL LIFE
MAKINZY HERZOG Q&A
BRYCE BLAUM Q&A
DAVE SOUTH
AND MORE...

THE CHANGE IS REAL

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On the Cover: Josh Nebo has one of his many dunks this season. He was instrumental in the Aggies big turnaround this season.
Photo by Rob Havens '88

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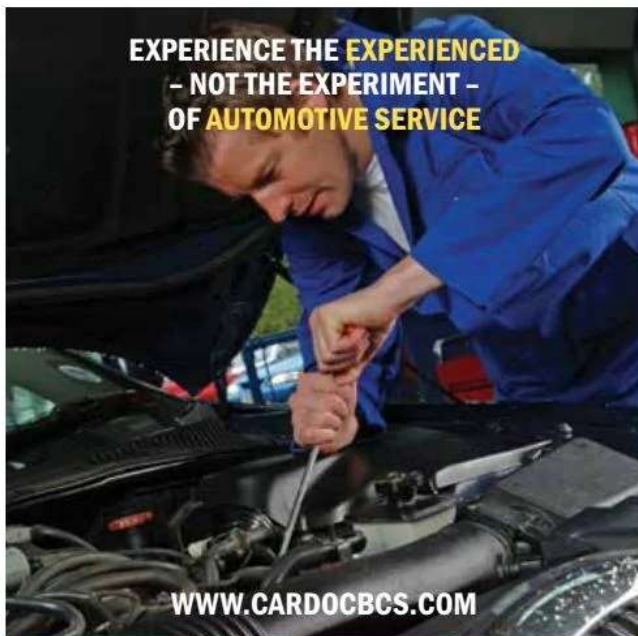
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Howdy Ags!

Thomas Paine once said, “These are the times that try men’s souls...” I think it’s easy to say we are living in one of those times. He went on to say “...the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph...” We are definitely living and navigating in uncharted waters. As each day passes, the news we get from around the world can make us anxious and unsure what the future holds. I have faith that we will get through this and I believe we will have a lot more appreciation for the small things that before we probably took for granted.

A lot of times you hear the phrase, “It’s just a game.” After what we are going through now, I believe we all know that it’s not just a game. Sports have become a big part of our lives. For our student-athletes, it’s a huge part of their lives as they spend almost every day preparing their bodies and minds for the next game. They spend hours and hours working out, lifting weights, conditioning their bodies, watching tape, and attending team meetings. They do all of this while still taking classes, studying, taking tests and working on projects. When my son was on the football team I got to see firsthand how hard he worked and let me just say, the grind is real.

For the fans, it can be an escape from the stressful world we live in. For some, it’s entertainment and for others, it is part of their daily lives. The word “fan” comes from the word “fanatic” and not having sports for these people can be life-altering.

As I write this letter, it would normally be the time that I would be flipping back and forth to the most exciting NCAA tournament basketball game instead of seeing what I can binge-watch on Netflix.

Putting this issue together gave me hope as I searched through pictures of all of our spring events that I covered in the last month or so. On a personal level, not having an Aggie game to go to has been tough. My son Tyler was scheduled to walk across that stage in Reed in May to get his Aggie diploma and now that won’t happen which makes me really sad. But I know when we get through this, I will appreciate Aggie sports so much more than I ever did before.

I hope you enjoy this issue and as you flip through the pages it will give you hope too, that we will get through this and someday soon get to cheer on our Aggies in every sport!

Gig’em Ags!

Rob '88



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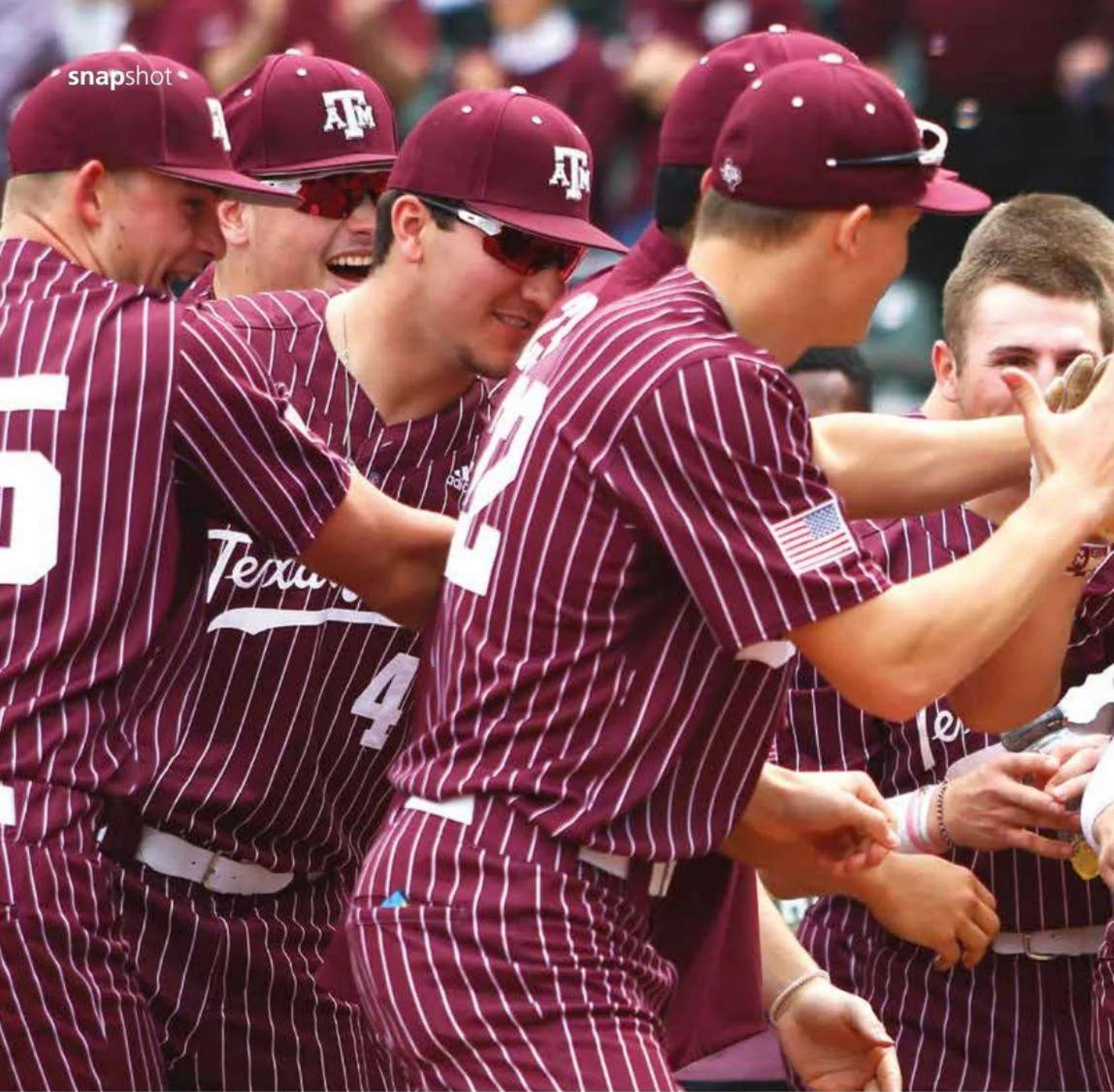


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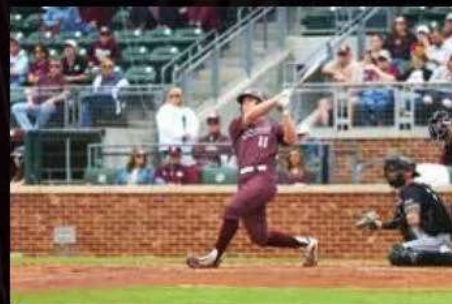
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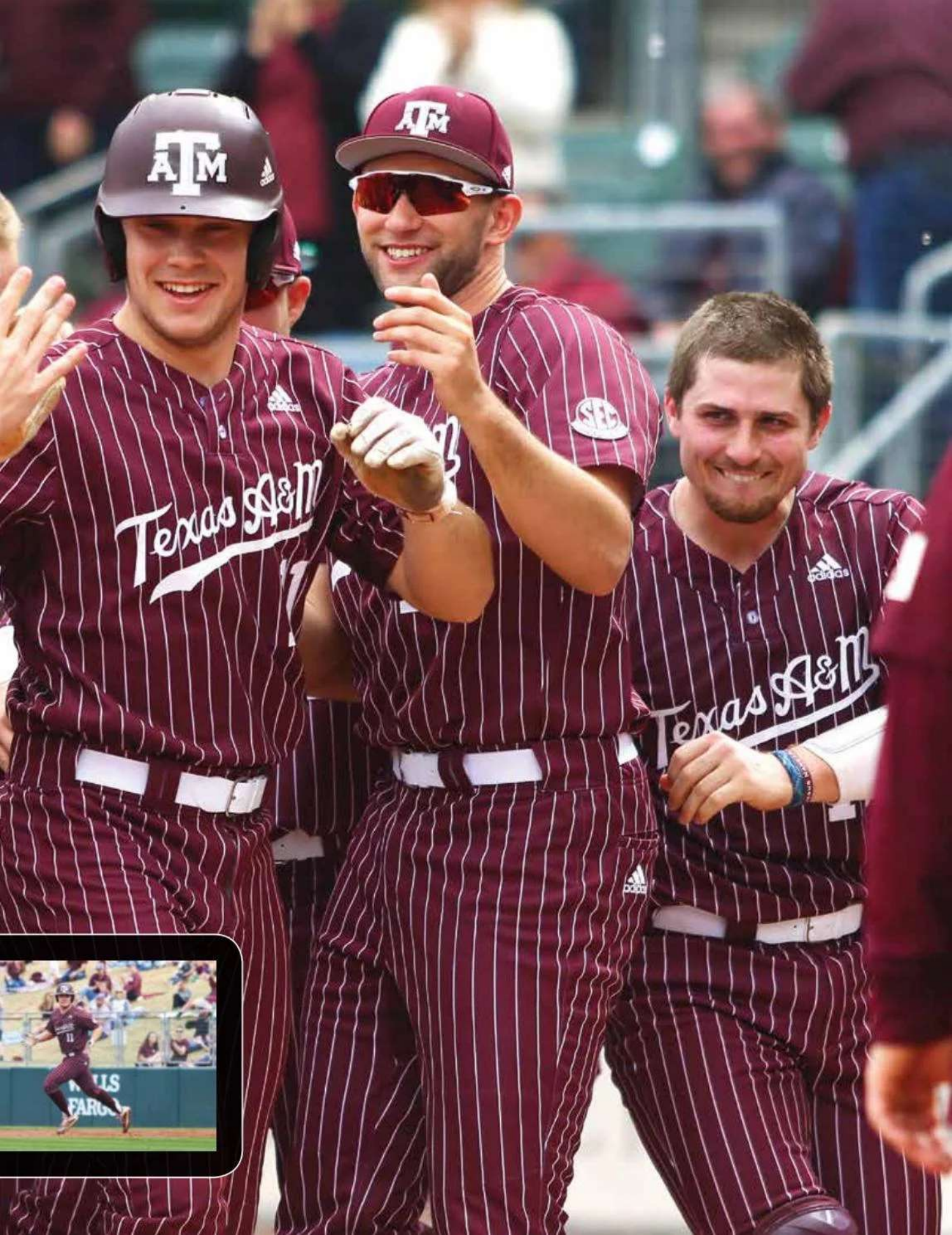



...three dingers in five at-bats

Austin Bost is greeted by his teammates after the second of three bombs he ignited against New Mexico State. Inset pics show the swing and his Michael Jordan shrug as he rounded the bases in game three of the series. The previous night he hit a pinch-hit three-run homer, earning him a spot in the Sunday lineup. He did not disappoint, as he hit two more in the final game of the sweep racking up a total of 7 RBI's in the two games.

Photo by Rob Havens '88







snapshot

...comeback kid

Junior guard Aaliyah Wilson proved nothing could keep her down, as she battled back from a season-ending knee injury in 2019 to help the Aggies this year. She finds daylight in the lane in this picture, taken during the Auburn game, where she scored 12 points including two of three from long distance. She played in all 30 games and started in nine.

Photo by Rob Havens '88



snapshot

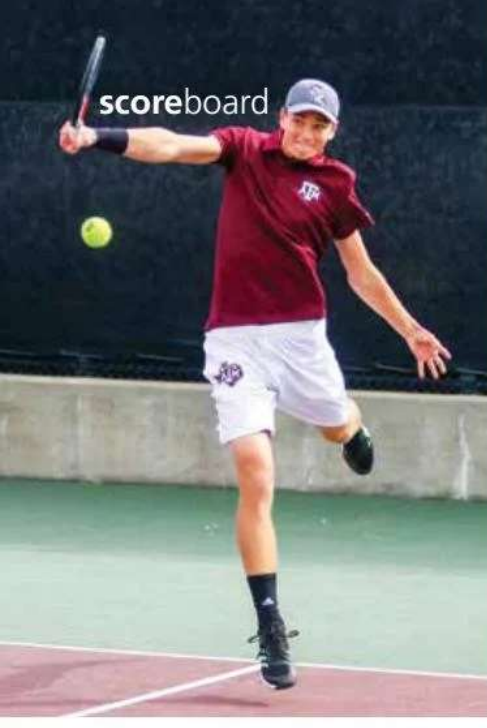




...no more bubbles

The 12th Man releases bubbles at the Frisco Classic as the Aggie baseball team scored a run versus former Big 12 foe Oklahoma State. The tradition of shooting bubbles in the air after the Aggies score has become a favorite for all ages. Unfortunately, with the cancellation of all sports, we will all have to wait until next February to blow our bubbles.

Photo by Rob Havens '88



[MEN'S TENNIS] The Aggies finished the season with a seven-match winning streak and were 4-0 in conference play and 12-3 overall. Ranked No. 12 in the nation at the time, the Aggies upset No. 6 Florida 4-3 at the Mitchell Tennis Center. After the huge win, Head Coach Steve Denton said, "It is amazing winning four singles points against a team like Florida. They are one of the best teams in the country and certainly outdoors in singles. These are the kind of matches that you come to Texas A&M to play in."



[BASEBALL] Rob Childress' squad finished the season on a five-game winning streak and had an overall 2020 season record of 15-3. The guys were on a bus, ready to leave to play their first conference series against Auburn when they received the call that the season was suspended. This will go down as the year that could have been. The Aggies Friday night starter, Asa Lacy was on fire and has a very good chance to be a number one selection in the upcoming Major League Baseball draft.

[MEN'S GOLF] The golf team had high expectations for this season and were ranked No. 5 in the country as they played in their last tournament in Chula Vista, California. This spring, the men won two tournaments and finished second in a third to move up in the polls. After their first team win of the spring, Coach J.T. Higgins said, "This was probably one of the best team wins I've ever been a part of. To see all five guys finish in the top 20 is pretty impressive and the worst round we had was a 72." In the only four events they competed in this spring the Aggies went first, first, second and fourth!

[SOFTBALL] Coach Jo Evan's young squad finished the abbreviated season with a 17-9 overall record and a 1-2 SEC record. The highlight of their shortened season was a 7-6 comeback win over No. 5 Arizona team at the Mary Nutter Classic. Texas A&M scored five runs in the top of the sixth inning and Makinzy Herzog came into the game in relief and pitched the final two innings to get the save. The Aggies followed the win up by going toe-to-toe with perennial power No. 3 Oklahoma, narrowly falling 2-1 to the multi-national championship squad.





[WOMEN'S BASKETBALL] The Aggies finished the season with a 22-8 overall record. The team went seven games without their star player, Chennedy Carter, recording a 4-3 record during the span. But they bounced back winning four straight when she returned. Unfortunately, they ended the season on a three-game skid including going one and done in the SEC Tournament before the season was canceled. On the bright side, Chennedy Carter and N'dea Jones became the first pair of Aggies to be named All-SEC First Team in the same season.



[EQUESTRIAN] The team had a 5-7 overall record including a 2-4 conference mark. The spring was highlighted by big wins over No. 3 Georgia and No. 9 Baylor. The Aggies wrapped up the season in fine style as they went toe-to-toe with No. 1 Auburn and were just edged out 9-10. After the contest, Head Coach Tana McKay said, "I could not be more proud of this group. They rode smart and left it all in the arena."

[TRACK & FIELD] The men had a great indoor season, posting wins at the Ted Nelson Invitational and the Texas Aggie Invitational. The men used that winning experience to finish third at the SEC Indoor Championships. The women tallied three meet wins this spring in the Ted Nelson Invitational, Texas Aggie Invitational and the Charlie Thomas Invitational. The women posted a sixth-place finish at the SEC Indoor Championships. Unfortunately, the teams were ready to compete at the NCAA Indoor Championships when the event was canceled due to COVID-19.

[MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING] Texas A&M had a stellar spring, winning big at LSU and following it up with huge win over SMU here in Aggieland. The momentum didn't stop as the men matched their best finish ever with second place on the team podium at the SEC Championships. The Aggies tallied three individual medals and a team medal in the 400 Free Relay event.



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[WOMEN'S TENNIS] Texas A&M finished the abbreviated season with a 13-4 mark including going 2-2 in conference play. They had an 8-0 record at home and finished the season with a big win over Florida in Gainesville. Coach Mark Weaver talked about the win: "That was a great team win for our group. Florida and Stanford are probably the two biggest powerhouses in college tennis, so to defeat them on their home courts really says a lot about our group. Florida has won 14 national team championships over the years. I believe that is the first time we have ever beaten them in Gainesville. One thing that I am very pleased with our squad is how we have bounced back all season. After all four of our losses we have responded with a better result than the match before."

[WOMEN'S GOLF] The women's team only got to compete in two events this spring. They finished 9th in the IJGA Collegiate Invitational in Mexico and third place at the ICON Invitational in The Woodlands. In the final round of the ICON tournament, the Aggies vaulted past No. 1 Texas and ended with a bang as junior Amber Park holed out from the No. 5 fairway for an eagle-2 on her final hole. Senior Courtney Dow birdied her final hole, giving the Aggies a three-shot swing!

[WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING] The Aggies had three meet wins this spring and posted big wins over SMU, LSU and, Arkansas. The team finished sixth at the SEC Championships. Coach Steve Bultman commented on their results: "Obviously we would have liked to finish higher. But we knew going in that it was going to be tough with the sickness and injuries we've had this year and just graduating some good swimmers."





AGGIE SPORTS PROVIDE

Wonderful Life

BY ROB HAVENS '88

In the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey is given the gift of seeing what the world would be like if he had never been born. He quickly discovers what a sad world it would be if he had never touched the lives that he had throughout his time on earth. Suddenly, all of the negative things that had brought him to the brink of ending it all seem insignificant compared to all the good things he had in his life. Years from now, we will look back at March of 2020, as the sports we love were suspended and we got to see what our world would be like without them.

It seems surreal right now, but for Texas A&M, it started as our basketball team travelled to Nashville for the SEC tournament. The Aggies were coming off two of the biggest wins of the year; they defeated No. 17 Auburn on the road and had a 77-69 home win over Arkansas. The Coronavirus, which started in Wuhan, China, was spreading over the United States and tensions were high as officials were attempting to stop the spread and keep people safe.

As the first round of the SEC Tournament began, there were fans in the stands, but the decision makers were already discussing plans either to play the remainder of the games with no fans or to limit the number of fans to families and support staff. With the NCAA tournament just a week away, they were

already talking about the possibility of keeping the stands completely empty.

The first domino to fall was in Oklahoma City as a capacity crowd at an NBA game were told the game would not be played. There was a positive test from a Utah Jazz player, and the NBA suits made the decision to suspend the season. That decision set off a chain reaction that would suspend or end sports for months to come.

The following day, different conferences one-by-one decided to cancel their post season tournaments. The ACC Tournament was scheduled to begin, and Florida State and Clemson had already taken the floor to warm up when the last-minute decision was made. In Madison Square Garden, Creighton and St John's played the first half before the rest of the Tourney was cancelled.

All eyes turned to the NCAA to see what they would do. They had already decided to move forward with the Big Dance without fans in the stands. Now the cancellations of the conference tourneys left plenty of doubts if the tournament would actually happen. In professional sports, the NHL announced they were suspending their season. Finally the decision was announced that The Final Four Basketball Tournament would be cancelled. It was a punch in the gut, as

sports fans around the country found out that one of the biggest events in sports would be cancelled.

The Aggie basketball team made arrangements to head back to College Station, knowing that their season was over. For three seniors that meant the end of their collegiate careers. Within hours of that decision, the SEC announced a suspension of all spring sporting events until March 30. The NCAA doubled down by cancelling all spring NCAA Championships for the rest of the school year.

Our track and field athletes were already in Albuquerque, NM getting ready to compete in the Indoor Track & Field Championships when they got the news. Coach Pat Henry expressed his disappointment "...I think they could've started and finished these championships without affecting all of these young people's careers. I don't know how the NCAA will go forward from this point because you have young people in their fifth year, you have seniors who have no opportunity to complete a collegiate career or even to help to prepare for a professional career. It is very difficult as a coach to watch these young people go through this entire situation."

Our baseball team was on the bus getting ready to head to Auburn for a weekend series when the announcement of the suspension was made. Our softball team, men's and women's tennis teams, and golf teams were told their games were suspended. Equestrian and swimming & diving team championships were cancelled as well.

Then on Friday March 13th the SEC

announced all sports activities were suspended through April 15th. That includes individual practices on campus, teams practices, meetings and games. That includes spring football and recruiting. Texas A&M extended spring break by a week for our students and made the decision to have online classes only for the remainder of this spring semester.

Athletic Director Ross Bjork met with the media to discuss the decisions. There was a conference call made with all of the athletic directors to make that decision with the approval of university presidents and chancellors. The NCAA implemented a dead period for recruiting until April 15th as well. Athletes for spring sports would receive extra eligibility due to these suspensions. These decisions were made for the sake of the health and well being of the student athletes, coaches, support staff, and people in the community. At a time like this, health was the most important factor in these decision-makers' minds. They made these decisions to help the country, as a whole, to stop the spread of the virus.

Obviously, the health and safety of everybody is the most important thing, but like George Bailey in the movie, we have been given the opportunity to see what life would be like without sports. As just a sports fan, the last couple of days have felt empty. There were no brackets to fill out. The excitement level of four consecutive days of March Madness is gone. There will be no Cinderella stories, no last second buzzer beaters, no unsung heroes leading their teams to unexpected wins, and no

"Shining Moment."

The suspension means no family trips to the ballpark to watch our baseball and softball teams play as we gobble down Aggie dogs and blow bubbles when they score. Not only does Aggie sports provide entertainment, but it also provides an escape from the stressful world we live in. It gives us an opportunity to spend time with family and friends cheering on the school we hold so dear.

This suspension disrupts the lives of our student athletes on a whole other level. Our world-class track team lost the opportunity to win national championships and compete against the best, which they have been training for since last year. The Equestrian Team, which has competed all season, lost a chance to bring home another national title. Our men's basketball team was playing their best ball of the season and anxious to see how far they could go. Our women's basketball team had the talent to make a run, but now they will never know how far they could have gone. The NCAA cancelling spring championships means no College World Series.

For our athletes that work so hard to win championships while going to school, this time must be really tough to handle. Just like George Bailey, who yearned for the opportunity to get back to reality, we all can't wait for this virus to be defeated so we can have our Aggie sports back. When they do, we will all have a greater appreciation for what Aggie sports mean to us, and we will all understand what a wonderful life we have here in Aggieland. ■





THE CHANGE
IS **REAL**

BY ROB HAVENS '88



As the media met with Buzz Williams before the season began, he didn't sugarcoat what he thought this team would be able to accomplish this season. Without throwing his kids under the bus, he let us know that there was a big hill to climb to get this program where it needed to be in order to compete for championships.

The Aggies returned five players that in Coach William's words were "some big minute players." At the time, Josh Nebo hadn't practiced one minute, and our new coach was skeptical if he ever would. TJ Starks was one of the most talented returners, but he had been in and out of the doghouse under the previous coaching staff and began this season on the bench with an injury. Before the third game of the season, he was arrested for marijuana possession and was suspended indefinitely. Starks wound up leaving the program, leaving Buzz with three returning players that had played significant minutes the previous year.

Our coach found himself in a unique situation as he tried to install a program with a thin lineup full of inexperienced kids. Early on, he struggled to have enough guys to run a practice at times, and he had to use managers and assistant coaches to fill in the holes left by injuries.

The Aggies were able to win their first two games, but even against lesser talented teams it was evident the squad was struggling to score. From the beginning fans, could tell the success of this years roster would come down to defense.

Some coaches that join new teams decide to do what they can but ultimately understand they will have to wait until they recruit "their players" before they will be successful. Fortunately for Texas A&M, Buzz made the decision to figure out what his kids were best at, and develop a game plan around that, in order to win. He worked with the lineup we had instead of just waiting for new recruits.

It seemed unlikely that the Ags would be able to win a conference game this year. The one thing that you could see when you went to games was that our players worked hard.



The games were ugly, but it became clear that's what the game plan was. The Aggies became disruptive and forced teams to play a different game than they wanted to play. They would pack the paint and force their opponents to shoot threes.

The m.o. for the team was to play tough defense, to make teams do what they don't want to do, to frustrate your opponent and make enough plays to win at the end. As the Aggies wrapped up 2019 they were able to win three non-conference games and generate some momentum heading into SEC play.

The Aggies fell to Arkansas in their first conference game, but on January 7th the Aggies had a season-changing victory over Ole Miss. After trailing by ten points at the half, the Aggies rallied behind Josh Nebo and Wendell Mitchell who combined for 26 points in the come-from-behind win. The victory gave the team confidence and showed them that they could compete in the league.

Texas A&M followed up that win with a huge victory over Vanderbilt and the team that was not expected to win a conference game all of the sudden had a winning record in the SEC. Josh Nebo was being called on to help carry the team. The offense, according to Williams, was to try to get the ball to the rim so Nebo and company could make something happen. Nebo needed to get rebounds, put backs, and then be a shot blocking machine on the defensive end.

The gritty group of underdogs got tired of hearing what they couldn't do and decided to show everyone what they could. They won five of their last seven games. The young talent matured, the seniors led the team, and the offense began to click. The Aggies went to Auburn on a mission and stood toe-to-toe with the No. 17 team in the country. Before a sold out crowd, the Aggies beat the Tigers 78-75.

They returned to Aggieland with the chance to secure a winning record if they could beat Arkansas in the final regular season game. The team trailed 28-21 in the first half before turning things around and racing past the Hogs on senior day, giving the hometown crowd a great ending to Coach Williams' first season.

The change from October to March was really quite amazing. This team bought in early and learned how to play hard together. They had little wiggle room in order to win games. Every player was instrumental in making this team win. The cherry on top happened when the AP named Buzz Williams the SEC Coach of the Year.

Unfortunately, the season came to an abrupt ending because of the Coronavirus and the team didn't get the chance to compete in the SEC Tournament. After returning home, Buzz addressed the team and told them "What transpired in this program over the last six months, was unlike anything that I've ever been a part of. I'm grateful for the lessons, I appreciate the character of the people involved. The work and the sacrifices."

Buzz told this group at the beginning of the season that they were going to the moon. Their fighting spirit was the foundation of that journey, and they showed what can be accomplished with a team that loves each other and is willing to work hard for a common goal. This team didn't win a championship, but they will always be known as the group that changed everything. ■



Q&A

MAKINZY HERZOG

TELL ME ABOUT GROWING UP AND WHEN YOU STARTED PLAYING SOFTBALL.

I started playing when I was about five, I played in 6U. My sister started playing and she's the reason I started. I played with like eight of my friends for like ten years that we were on the same team together and so that was pretty cool. And it led me here.

DID YOU PLAY OTHER SPORTS GROWING UP?

Yes. I did gymnastics, probably since I was two or three. I did that competitively for like eight years. In middle school, I did volleyball and track and then in high school, I just stuck to softball.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR PATH TO A&M.

I committed to Florida State the summer going into my freshman year. So, it was all Florida State from there. I got there and I loved it, but I just wanted to be closer to family, closer to home. I was really homesick and it just led me here. My sister went here and both of my parents went here. It just felt like the right choice for me.

DID COACH SNIDER HELP IN THAT DECISION TO COME HERE?

Before I even knew he was coming here, I already had in my head this is where I wanted to go if I had the opportunity to. But hearing he was coming here as well, I thought it was a really cool opportunity to keep working with him and growing with him on my hitting game.

HOW HAS IT BEEN SO FAR?

It's been awesome! Everyone has been so welcoming. I know a lot of these girls I've played with them or against them in travel ball throughout my whole life. It's been really fun to get on the field with them again. All the coaches are awesome. Coach Rep (Katie Repole) use to coach me in my travel ball years, a while back so it's really cool just to get with everyone again.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT ON THE FIELD AS AN AGGIE?

Mary Nutter was pretty fun because it was our first test at really, really good competition and I think we did really well and proved ourselves to everybody!

WHO DO YOU LIKE TO HANG OUT WITH ON THE TEAM?

My roomie Kayla Garcia, I always hang out with her. I'm always hanging out with Kelbi and Ashley Daugherty as well. Pretty much everybody but those are the ones I tend to be with!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE AGGIE SOFTBALL TRADITION OUT HERE?

TikToks?! (laughs) Yeah me and Kelbi and Ashley are starting to do TikToks before every weekend.

WHO'S THE BRAINCHILD ON WHAT YOU ARE DOING ON A TIKTOK?

Probably Kelbi. She always finds the TikToks and we make them and everything.

BECAUSE YOU ARE A TWO-WAY PLAYER, WHICH IS MORE EXCITING FOR YOU, A BIG STRIKEOUT OR A BIG HIT?

I'd have to say a big hit. Hitting has always been my favorite. I love pitching too, but hitting ever since I was little, that's what I wanted to do. So it's my favorite.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TRADITION AS A STUDENT?

I'd say the Aggie Ring. That's a lot of people's favorite. I just think that's very cool. You get to keep it for the rest of your life.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO AFTER YOU GRADUATE?

I think I want to become a wedding planner. I'm in Recreation, Parks and Tourism getting my event planner certificate, so I think that's what I want to do with it.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE EXPERIENCE AS AN AGGIE SINCE YOU HIT THE TOWN?

Probably again the Mary Nutter tournament because it was our first away tournament. And I think it was really cool, we had to sing on the bus. All the newbies had to, and I just thought it was a cool bonding experience for everybody.

TALK A LITTLE ABOUT THIS FACILITY, YOU HAVE SEEN SOFTBALL FIELDS AROUND THE COUNTRY, HOW DOES DAVIS DIAMOND MEASURE UP?

I've never seen anything like it. It's huge for one thing. Just the atmosphere when you are playing a game, people all sitting in the stands, it's surreal

HOW HAS IT BEEN HAVING COACH EVANS AS YOUR COACH?

Oh, she's awesome! Really nice and she's really there for you and for everybody and she wants the best for you. And I love her, she's awesome!

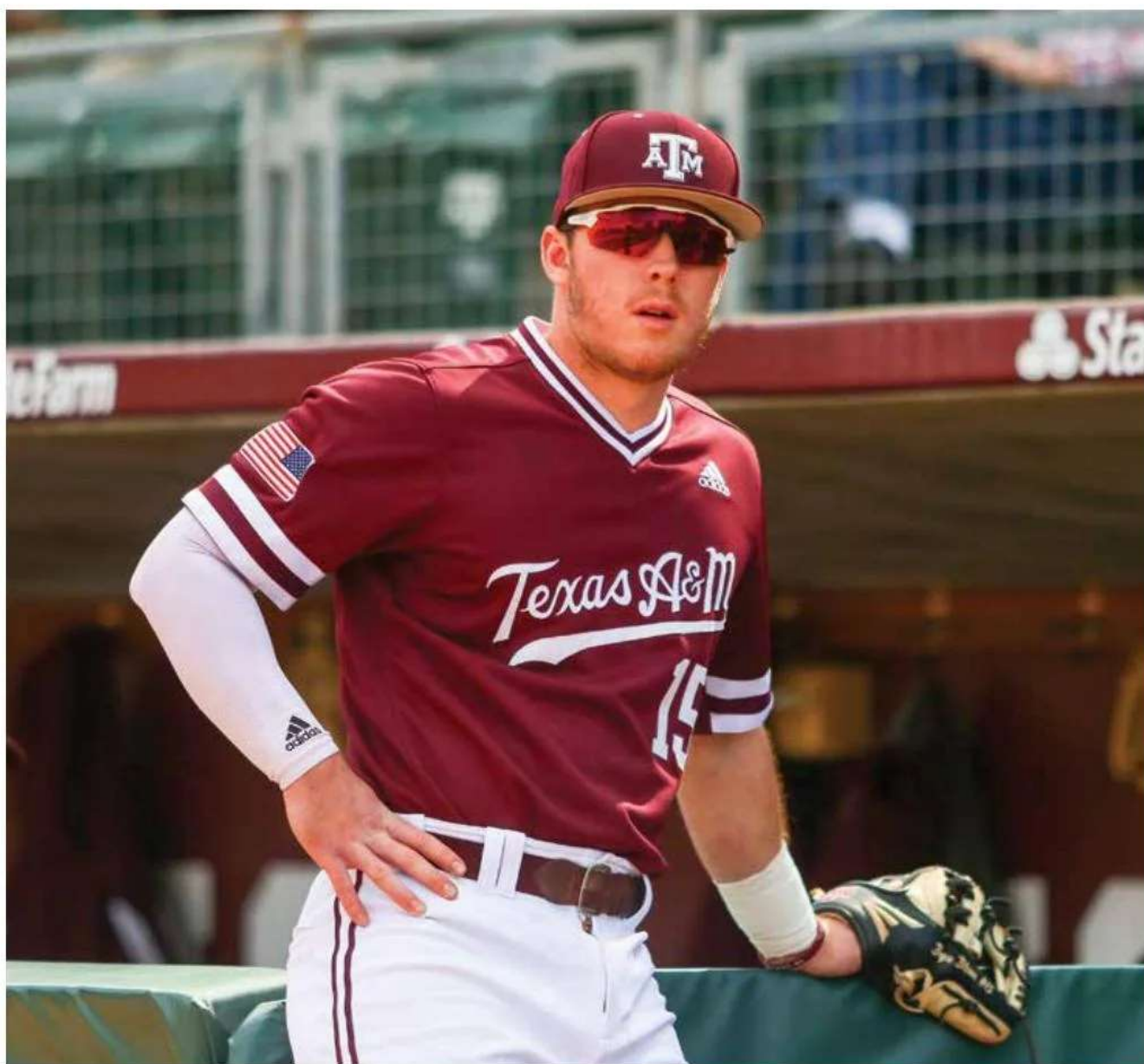
COACH JO EVANS ON WHAT MAKINZY HERZOG HAS MEANT TO THIS TEAM:

Makinzy is a terrific athlete. She can do it all. She's a great defender. She's a great pitcher. She's a great hitter. You look at what she has done for us in the leadoff spot, it's pretty special. You know the kid can get up there and hit a homerun or she can lay down a bunt and beat it out. Her doubles are off the charts right now. So she's been a breath of fresh air. She's a great teammate. She's pretty quiet, she doesn't say a whole lot but she's pretty loud with her game though. I think it has been impressive what she has come out here and done. You can see she's having fun and relaxed playing the game. ■



Q&A

BRYCE BLAUM



WHEN DID YOU START PLAYING BASEBALL?

I started playing baseball when I was three years old. I have a brother that is two years older than me and somehow my parents figured out a way for me to be on his team. So, I started playing organized baseball when I was three.

DID YOU PLAY OTHER SPORTS GROWING UP?

I played AAU basketball and then middle school football, and then after that strictly baseball in high school.

TALK ABOUT YOUR PATHWAY TO A&M AND KIND OF WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE. I KNOW YOU WENT TO OLE MISS FIRST. HOW DID IT ALL HAPPEN?

It was kind of a difficult path. My parents really wanted me to come here straight out of high school and looking back at it, I really should have listened to them. They had my best interest at heart and a degree here at Texas A&M is second to none. That Aggie ring is incredible to get. I committed when I was 16 and you're not very mature then, so I decide to go to Ole Miss. Thankfully for Coach Childress, Coach Seely and Coach Bolt at the time, they gave me the opportunity to come back. That year was the biggest learning process I could have had. Just learning the culture that the coaches want to establish, to get friends in the locker room. Being a part of a team, it has felt like home since I have been here. I couldn't be more grateful for this University and this coaching staff.

YOUR TIME AT OLE MISS AND THE YEAR THAT YOU HAD TO SIT OUT, HOW DID YOUR GAME IMPROVE?

I just think that for anybody picking a school, it's where your right fit is. When you feel comfortable with the people in the locker room, the coaching staff, the nutritionist, everybody, the university. It really lets you be yourself again. Because if you come to any of these schools for a reason, you are good enough in high school or they wouldn't recruit you if you weren't. It's just knowing where you fit in, and the right place. Being from Texas, I really wish... I wasted a year, but it was a great learning experience. I just think you find where you're at the most comfortable and then you can excel at your greatest abilities.

HOW HAS IT BEEN AT TEXAS A&M?

It's been a dream come true. It's everything and anything more than I could have ever dreamed of. It's very lucky when you have friends on the team. Coach Childress always preaches to us during the recruiting process when you're here that guys in the locker room are going to be standing in your wedding one day. And I have plenty of friends and roommates that I've had over the years here that I fully believe will be at my wedding someday. They've made it so easy to come to the yard every single day and give everything we have as a group. We are all sold out to each other. It's cool looking to your left and your right knowing he has your back and he has your back and you can just trust everybody in the program.

TELL US ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LAST YEAR'S BALL CLUB AND THIS YEAR'S BALL CLUB.

I think last year we were extremely talented. Guys like John Doxakis, Braden Shewmake, Kasey Kalich got drafted very high for a reason. I think this year those are tough pieces to fill, but we have great personnel. The coaches did a great job recruiting, guys like Logan Sartori, Zane Schmidt, the list goes on and on, Rody Barker. To fill those shoes is a big fill, I think collectively we can do it together – no one person can do it on their own. Just the philosophy that Coach Caillet has brought in that we've all sold out to. It was cool to see through the first ten games, we had a struggle in Frisco, but it's getting back to our identity. We know we are going to be successful and he's been preaching that. Everybody has bought into that.

DO YOU LIKE THE NEW OFFENSE?

I absolutely love it. When things are rolling the way, they are supposed to roll it's so fun to be a part of. Like the game when we beat Army 14-12, we knew. We had no lack of confidence everybody knew, just sell out to each other. To score 14 runs against a very good team. It's just cool because we're not stagnant anymore. Everything is in motion, just playing fast and we have a great pitching staff and it's nice for our part finally to be able to look up at the scoreboard if they need to get picked up on a day, which doesn't happen very often, but we can carry our role too.

BECAUSE YOU'RE SUCH A LEADER ON THIS TEAM SOMETIMES IT IS, "SO GOES YOU, SO GOES THE REST OF THE TEAM." DO YOU ACCEPT THAT RESPONSIBILITY?

Absolutely, I feel like I'm a leader on this team, but we have other guys that have been through it such as Mikey Hoehner and Hunter Coleman, and if I don't get it done someone else will. That's why it has been so much fun to be a part of this offense. One through nine and actually, eleven through fourteen guys coming off the bench and just pitch hitting. You know they are going to get it done too so it takes the weight of the world off of your shoulders, you can just go play for them. Go have fun, go play the game we've been playing since we were little. If I don't do it Logan is going to do it. Hunter's going to do it Frizzell, Cam Blake and it's just cool to have full trust in your team.

IS THERE GREAT CAMARADERIE ON THIS CLUB?

Absolutely, I think the chemistry is awesome. We have a shortstop that's a freshman Trevor Warren, that guy is a goofball and he's been such a blessing for us to get. We call him the TikTok god. He always posts these TikTok videos where is dancing to these songs. At first your kind of like, "OK he's young," but it grows on you and you start laughing and start doing it with him. Just since spring has started, I think we have been growing closer together. In the fall we had a lot of new pieces, kind of starting to get to know each other, but the camaraderie and the chemistry on the field has grown in a substantial amount. It's very, very strong.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY SO FAR WEARING THE MAROON AND WHITE?

It's hard to pass up the moment in West Virginia but not only that, I think Vanderbilt weekend was really cool. Jonathan Ducoff was an incredible story and he gets the game-winning hit against the No. 1 team in the country. Just being able to experience Olsen Magic aspect from a guy that's worked his tail off and had a long road to get to where he is. Just being able to celebrate him because he deserved it was incredible and something I'll never forget.

WHEN YOU DID HIT THE GRAND SLAM WITH A FULL COUNT, THE LAST SWING OF THE GAME IN WEST VIRGINIA, HOW WAS THAT?

I mean it was a great feeling just knowing that we survived as a team and advanced. That's what coaches preached in the whole regional. We lost our first game and it was "survive and advance" from that point on. I gotta hand it to the guys in front of me, they got on base and I wouldn't have gotten the opportunity if they hadn't. Coach Bolt and Coach Seely were so huge keys for me last year. They gave me all the confidence in the world. They worked when I needed the extra work just the preparation before allowed me to go play freely. If I struck out there I could have looked in the dugout and said I gave it my all. That's was a relieving feeling going to the plate. Aaron Walters had a great at-bat to start that inning with a walk, Cam Blake had a hit, Braden Shewmake got walked. They really set up that opportunity for it to happen.

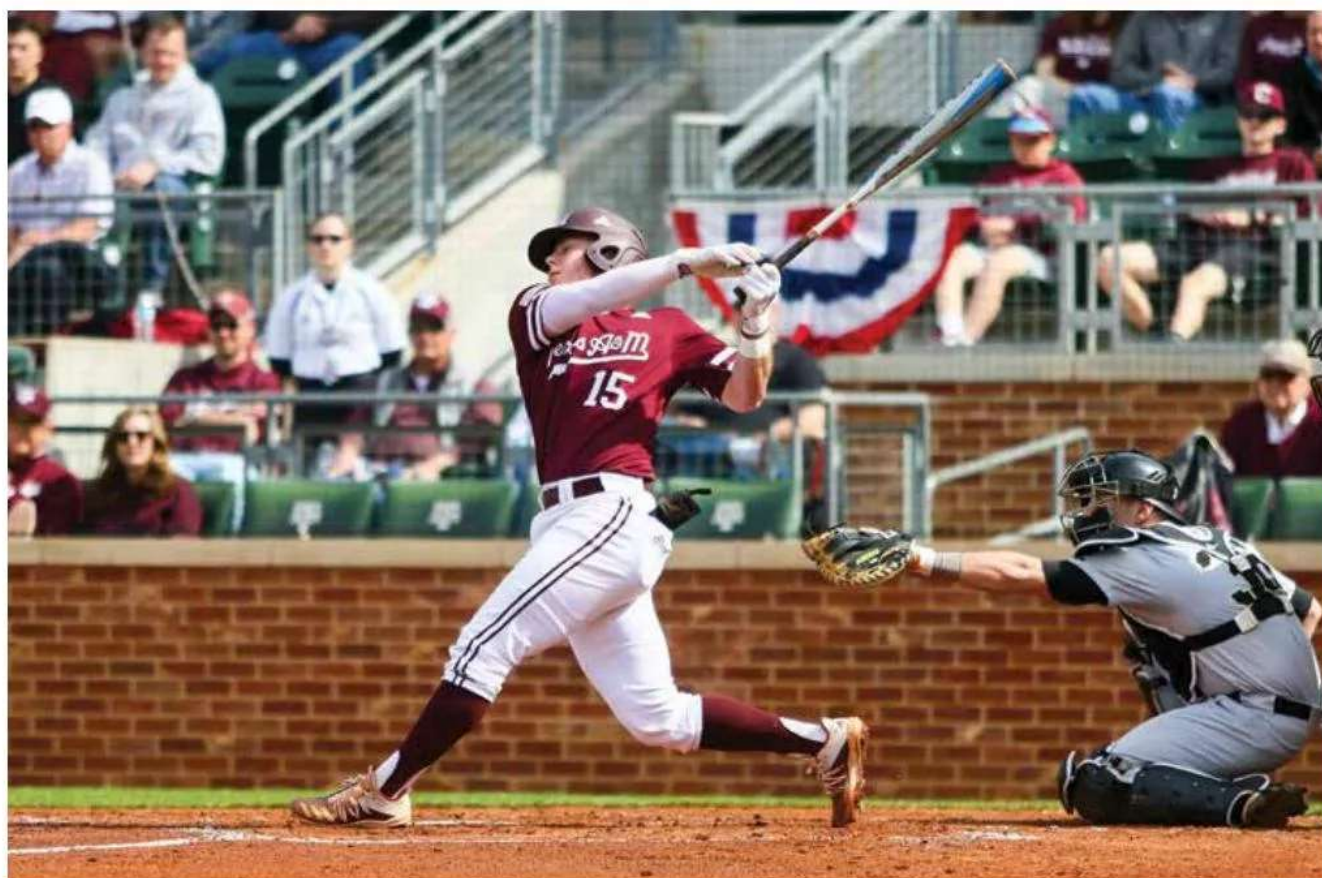
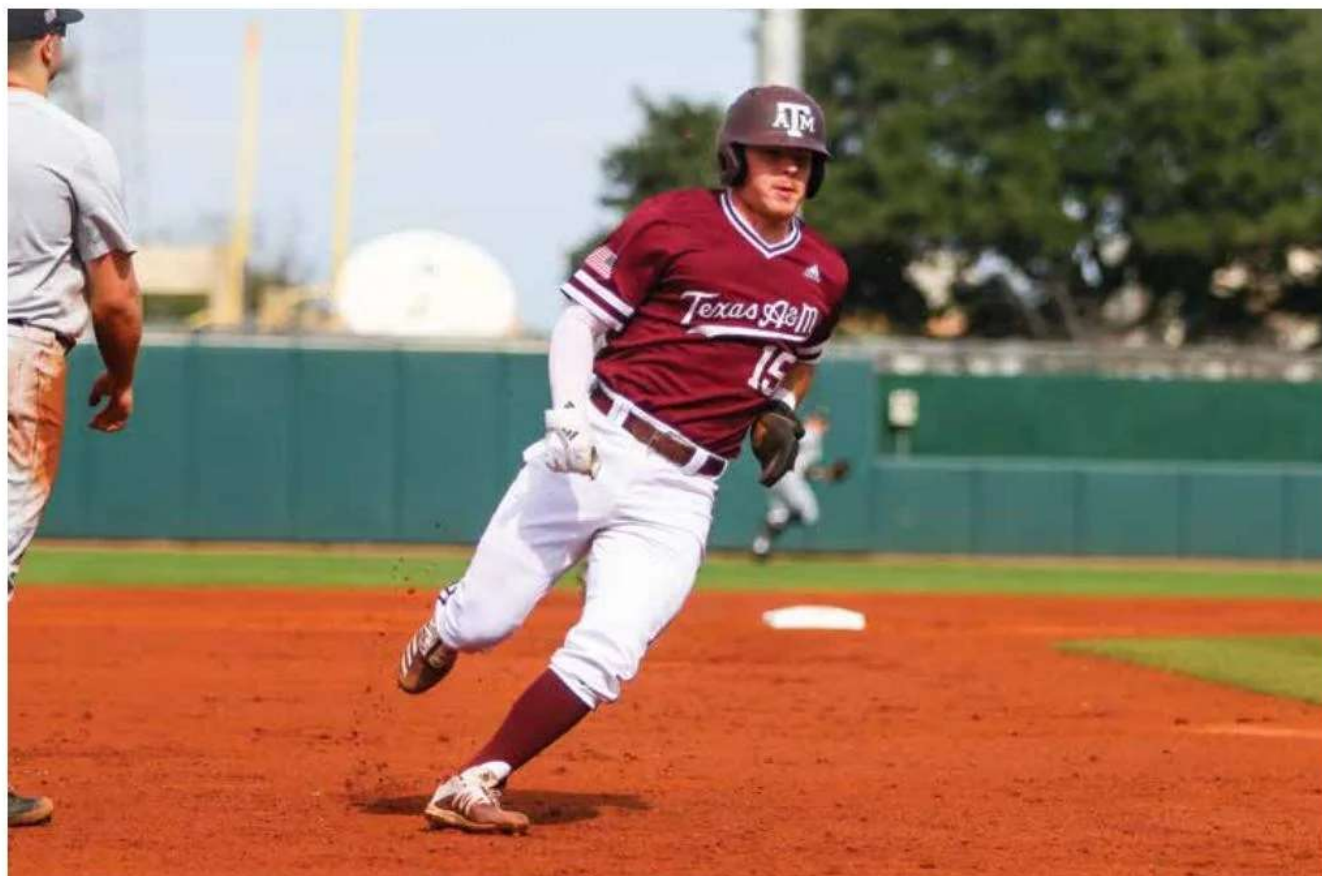
DID YOU KNOW THE MINUTE YOU HIT IT THAT IT WAS GONE?

Absolutely! Coach did a great job on the scouting report, that was their closer. He threw 64 pitches that game and he had thrown 59 sliders so going into that at-bat it was just slider and he really communicated that with me. I trusted his plan and it worked out for the better.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TRADITION AT AGGIE BASEBALL GAMES?

I think the coolest thing is when the whole stadium is packed and it's Sawing. The place is really rocking and everybody sawing it feels like the whole place is shaking. It's been cool to be in Kyle Field with 100,000 people and it really feels like its shaking there, but when this place is at max capacity it's a small portion of what Kyle Field has. The way they designed this stadium is cool because everybody is right on top of you so we hear everything that the fans are saying. We laugh because they are on our side, but I can only imagine what's going through the players heads. ■







SO LONG TO LEGENDARY VOICE OF AGGIE SPORTS

DAVE SOUTH

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Well, after fifty years in college athletics the longtime voice of the Aggies is riding off into the sunset. The 12th Man was fortunate to hear his familiar voice during football, basketball and baseball games. Dave wound up calling his last broadcast as the Aggie baseball team defeated Rice 6-2 on March 10th. Just a few days later, the season was suspended and then ultimately canceled.

South's voice is synonymous with some of the greatest moments in Aggie sports. At every home football game, the 12th Man shouts along as the Surr Parker score from the Big 12 Championship is shown on the big screen and Dave screams, "He got a touchdown! He got a touchdown! He got a touchdown! He got a touchdown!"

Dave came to Aggieland 35 years ago after assistant athletic director Ralph Carpenter asked him to fill in for a season at Kyle Field. Aggie fans young and old have had the privilege to hear his iconic voice over the radio for more than three decades.

While some kids dream of throwing the winning touchdown or sinking the winning shot, South dreamed of

making the unforgettable call. As a youth growing up in Wichita Falls he used to recreate the Brooklyn Dodgers game in his bedroom, next to his window pretending he was in the press box.

He called his last game at Kyle Field in 2017 but returned to Olsen Field the last three seasons. South loved baseball the most and we were blessed to get to hear him for a few more years.

Dave has been the quintessential representative of our university and anyone who has had the opportunity to meet him will find one of the most genuine human beings you will ever meet. With a smile on his face and a warm handshake, he greets people and makes them feel important.

As Dave has traveled around the country as the voice of the Aggies, he has made us all proud. As he moves away from the broadcast booth he will continue to give back as he has always done. When he is not serving the community here in the Brazos Valley he and his wife, Leanne, will be able to do some traveling and check off some things on their bucket list.

The season didn't turn out as expected

and our friends around the country will miss his baseball victory lap, but the man with great faith says he's not sad about it: "I'm not sad for a second, because I think I would be selling God short there. He gave me this to do for my life. I got 50 years, and he's got plans for me now and that's what I'm going to look forward to."

Most people have their favorite Dave South moment. Maybe it's his call of the Aggies beating No. 1 Alabama in Tuscaloosa after getting the Tide to jump offside on their last play. Or maybe one of the many Olsen Magic calls he made. For me, my favorite Dave South moment was when he sat down across from me in a break room at Minute Maid Park as we both got ready to cover an Aggie baseball game. It was just him and I eating a sandwich and having a normal conversation. It was special because I was sitting with a legend, but he was so approachable and kind that it felt like hanging out with an old friend.

We will miss you, Dave! God speed as you move on and continue to touch lives! Gig'em and God Bless! ■

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SAILING TEAM

BY ROB HAVENS '88

"I'm sailing away, set an open course for the virgin sea..." The opening line of the classic Styx song talks about looking to the sea and reflections in the waves sparking memories of childhood friends and dreams they shared. It's a catchy tune, and for club president Lyndsey Sager, who grew up sailing, joining the Texas A&M Sailing Team was her opportunity to make new friends and share her dream of sailing in college with her fellow Aggies.

In her first regatta with her new team, Sager says she was super nervous. "I didn't know anyone! A week later, after making the seven-hour drive to New Orleans for a regatta, I knew I had made the right decision in joining the team, and that I had found many of my go-to friends. They made me feel welcomed and everyone just clicked together. All it took was being stuck in a van with them for seven hours!"

Sager came to main campus after her freshman year at Texas A&M at Galveston, where she sailed with their club. (In fact, she sailed with her older brother while she attended school there.) We asked Sager about her favorite moment since joining the Sailing Team in College Station, and she told us, "The best moment for me, after having joined this team, was actually when I got to race against my brother and

beating him. I'll never let him live it down."

The competitive Sailing Team was born in 1990 and currently has about 30 team members, with 15 of them being very active. They practice every Tuesday and Thursday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Lake Bryan. The team is part of the South Eastern Intercollegiate Sailing Association (SEISA) conference, which is governed by the national body, the Inter-collegiate Sailing Association (ICSA). They compete in four styles of collegiate racing: match, single-hand, team, and fleet racing. The team's main rivals are the University of Texas and Texas A&M at Galveston.

Last spring the women's team qualified and competed at Nationals in Newport, Rhode Island, where they placed 18th. Unfortunately, the remainder of this season was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

The majority of club members join with no previous experience; they are simply intrigued by sailing. Once part of the club,

the existing members teach them how to sail.

We asked Sager what makes a good sailor, and she responded, "To be a good sailor, one must be open to taking instruction and learning from others. You also cannot be afraid of failure; you're going to have bad races, but all you can do is learn from the experience and move on." When asked about her favorite part of being on the team, Lyndsey told us, "I love the friends I have made on the team and being able to travel and sail with them."

The Sailing Team's student-athletes love the camaraderie of being on the team, but competing and making it to Nationals is the goal and the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Perhaps the club can take solace from the shortened season with the promise of the Styx classic: "... somehow we missed out on that pot of gold, but we'll try, best that we can, to carry on!"—which is great advice for all of us!



Rec Sports

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

TAEKWONDO CLUB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

If you Google Fightin' Texas Aggies, it's likely that your search will result in links to the Aggie band. But there is another group of Fightin' Texas Aggies on campus that are members of the Taekwondo Club at Texas A&M.

Taekwondo is a Korean martial art that began in the 1940s and 1950s. It requires great athletic ability as participants perform head-height kicks, jumping and spinning kicks, and other fast kicking techniques to score points. One of the best parts about the sport is that participants build strength, both physically and mentally, and gain valuable self-defense experience. The sport provides both an anaerobic and an aerobic workout, while at the same time developing participants' respect, integrity, and leadership skills.

The Texas A&M Taekwondo Club accepts members of all skill levels, from beginners to advanced, and consists of both a club and a competition team. While the club is open to anyone who has an interest in participating, members of the competition team must try out. As the competition team competes for championships, other club members work to learn the sport, improve their skills, and promote up to higher belts.

The competition team travels and competes both locally and nationally to represent Texas A&M. National competitions the team competes in include the Fort Worth International, the U.S. Open, the U.S. National Taekwondo Championships, and the Collegiate Nationals. In addition to sparring, club members also compete in forms competitions.

A great Taekwondo athlete is someone who is humble and willing to learn something new; someone who listens to

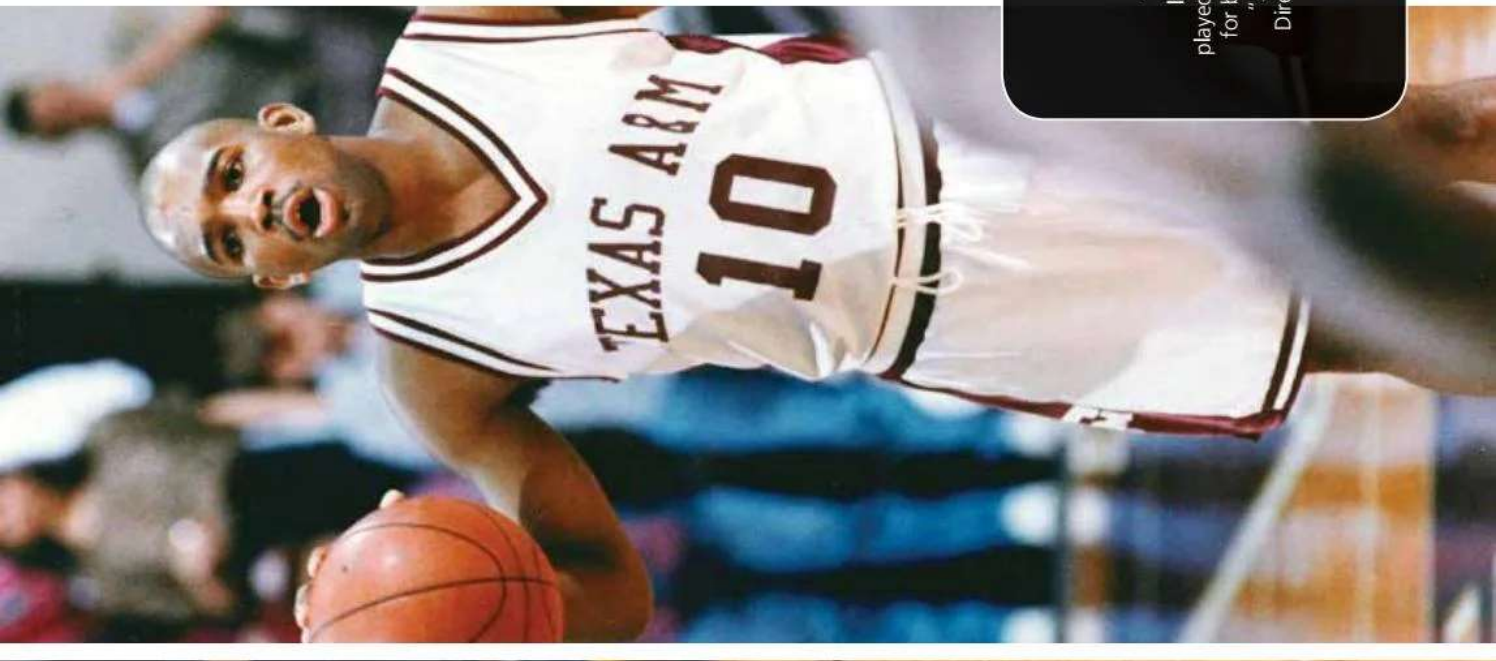
the coach and constantly strives to improve. Some of the club members have never participated in a martial art before but are looking to be a part of the A&M club and get in better shape.

The team considers itself a family, and everyone is welcoming and friendly. A club member told us, "It is amazing how we can go from kicking each other in the head at practice to being close friends who work out, study, volunteer, and hang out together outside of practice."

We are proud to recognize this group of true Fightin' Texas Aggies!







...here

We were saddened to hear the news that Aggie basketball legend David Edwards passed away on March 23, 2020. He played for the Maroon & White from 1991-1994. He was known for being a fierce competitor and had a charismatic personality. "Anytime Aggies lose a member of the family, it hurts," said Director of Athletics, Ross Bjork. "Hearing from his friends this was coronavirus related really hits close to home."

Photo provided by Aggie Athletics

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